

'MIGHT HAVE BEEN' WANDERERS LOSE

Sixty Seconds Knock Out

Ashford Town 3, Wycombe Wanderers 0

THE simple but essential art of putting the ball in the back of the net once again cruelly deserted Wycombe Wanderers and Ashford, who have the professional's healthy respect for the half chance, go marching on to meet Queens Park Rangers at home in the second round of the F.A. Cup.

One short, sharp burst of power play which produced two second half goals within the space of a minute knocked Wycombe out and transformed Ashford from a struggling anxious team of rapidly tiring veterans into confident cup killers.

But—as even the Ashford fans were prepared to admit—all the quality soccer came from Wycombe, even if it was spasmodic and not sustained.

With wing-halves Ivor Ashby and Charlie Gale flogging themselves to standstill and pivot John Fisher showing Welsh International ability by his covering of the pitch, but cumbersome Ashford players Joe White, Wycombe's old enemy the home attack was stymied and once again had to rely on the midfield play.

The greater speed and mobility of the younger Wycombe side should have produced goals but this was yet another 'might have been' performance with the forwards persistently failing to take their chances.

Dave Worley, switched from wing-half to the problem centre-forward position in a bold replay experiment, earned another chance by sheer courage. His unorthodoxy worried Ashford at times and he took a terrific battering from the big home defenders. Ironically, it was Worley who

fluffed the best opportunity of the game — at a vital stage when Ashford were only leading 1-0. With two Ashford defenders sprawled on the turf after a crack of heads Worley broke away on his own and shot wide with the goal at his mercy.

Wycombe's left-wing was virtually non-existent for most of the game. Steve Hyde was subdued by some fierce first-time tackling and Tony Horseman lacks the experience to assert himself in this level of soccer. Georgie Blair also disappointed and has lost his zip of a few weeks ago but there was no faulting Len Worley who attracted two and sometimes three red shirts whenever he received the ball and was easily the best forward on both teams.

A sad 14th minute defensive mix-up between goal-keeper Ken Brown and Fisher providing an opening gift for Ashford. Either could have reached a ball ambling towards the goal-line but inside-left Ron Clayton was allowed to nip in and centre for White to head an easy goal.

NEVER GAVE UP

Although Wycombe had more of the territorial play in both halves they could never match Ashford for punch. In the 77th minute Gordon Burden, ever a menace on the left-wing, crossed the ball for Clayton to bundle it home. Sixty seconds later White scored the best goal of the match after a solo burst through the centre.

Wanderers never gave up trying and were by no means disgraced. Gale and Ashby both took the ball deep into the Ashford defence and Gale's long shots often had goalkeeper Les Haydon in trouble. As so often with Wanderers one was left with the nagging thought that the better footballing team lost.